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# Agricultural Situation

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Agricultural Marketing Service  
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## SOME WHEAT VARIETIES WORK HARD FOR GROWER

Spring wheat planting time is practically here. That means many a wheat grower is hard at work already—trying to figure out what varieties will do the most for him, income-wise, this season.

In the hope of making things easier for the grower, the Agricultural Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture does a number of things:

It publishes at 5-year intervals a wheat variety survey. This lists variety favorites, as proven by acreage, and the areas in which they are most popular. In cooperation with various State Agricultural Experiment stations, it gladly furnishes information on any comparatively new varieties that are proving popular and tells the grower how they may be of use to him.

The survey also has listed 23 varieties considered to have undesirable quality characteristics. The Commodity Credit Corporation will discount these varieties 20 cents per bushel under the Wheat Price Support Program applicable to the 1957 crop.

The 23 discounted varieties were selected after consultation with experiment station personnel, agronomists, cereal chemists, and other experts in the field.

All these varieties have at least one strike against them quality-wise. Per-

haps their milling quality is inferior. Or perhaps their baking quality isn't just right. Perhaps they are deficient in both milling and baking qualities.

Here is the list:

Durum—Pentad, Golden Ball, and Peliss.

White—Rex, Sonora.

Hard Red Spring—Spinkcota, Premier, Sturgeon, Henry, Progress.

Hard Red Winter—Stafford, Pawnee Sel. 33, Red Chief, Chiefkan, Early

### Reminder to Growers:

A prospective plantings report on 1957 acreages of major crops will be out March 18. It will give you an idea of what other farmers are planning this year. In that way it may help you in your own planning.

If you receive an acreage card in the mail asking for your 1957 acreage intentions, please fill it out and mail it back to your State Statistician. Doing this will help to make the March 18 report more useful to you—and to thousands of other growers who fill out these forms from year to year.

Blackhull, Red Jacket, Kanking, New-chief, Blue Jacket, Purkof, Cimarron, Redhull.

Soft Red Winter—Kawvale.

With the exception of Henry, none of these undesirables are acceptable anywhere in the country. Henry gets a clean bill in Wisconsin and the State of Washington.

The discount plan was first tried on substantially the same varieties in the 1956 price support program.

Even though some of the undesirable varieties may have protein content high enough to qualify them for a premium, no protein premiums will apply to any of the undesirables in determining the loan rate. Neither will any Amber or Hard Amber Durum premiums apply.

Now as to some of the varieties that look particularly promising, in various sections, these days:

Among the durums, two new varieties, Langdon and Yuma, are doing a job combating race 15 B stem rust in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Lee is a Hard Red Spring with some resistance to stem rust. It is doing well in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana.

Among other Spring wheats, Rescue in Montana has shown resistance to the wheat stem saw fly. Mida and Thatcher in North and South Dakota and Rushmore in South Dakota also have some rust resistance. All three have shown good yielding characteristics.

Among the Hard Red Winter wheats, Pawnee in Kansas and Nebraska, has shown good resistance to the Hessian fly and to smut.

A substantial number of Hard Red Winter wheats—some new, some old

favorites—have shown strong gluten qualities over the years.

This is another way of saying they have good milling qualities. These qualities help to make them more suitable for sale both on the export market and at home.

Here are a few of the Hard Red Winter varieties with strong gluten qualities:

In Kansas, particularly, but also in Oklahoma—Kiowa. In Texas—Crockett, named after the pioneer and schoolboy hero. In Oklahoma—Concho. In Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas—Comanche and Ponca. In Nebraska, Cheyenne and Nebred, a pair of veterans that have recently won new popularity, have almost excessively strong gluten qualities.

Mellow gluten qualities are also of value in making good bread. Among the Hard Red Winter wheats, Triumph and Wichita in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, and Colorado display this quality.

In the far western States, most popular White wheats these days seem to be Lemhi in Idaho and Utah; Elmar in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon; Baart in Utah, Elgin in Washington, and Ramona 44 in California.

The eastern States specialize in Soft Red Winter varieties, although Yorkwin and Genesee, Soft White Winters, are grown in Michigan and New York.

Vigo, a comparatively new variety, now accounts for more than one-fifth of all Soft Red Winter acreage. It is grown mostly in Indiana, Missouri, Kentucky, and Ohio. Knox, a new high yielding variety, is showing up well in Indiana, Missouri, and Kentucky. Seneca, with high yields, is being grown on more than half the wheat acreage in Ohio.

**The Agricultural Situation is sent free to crop, livestock, and price reporters in connection with their reporting work.**

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# RECORD TURKEY

## CROP INTENDED

Turkey growers intended in early January to produce a record 84 million birds in 1957, 10 percent more than in 1956, according to the Crop Reporting Board.

The number of turkeys actually raised in 1957 will depend largely on prices for feed, supply and prices of hatching eggs and poults, and the sale of turkeys remaining in growers' hands.

Turkey prices to farmers during September–December 1956 averaged 4 cents a pound less than for the corresponding period in 1955.

Supplies of turkeys in storage on December 31, 1956, reached a record level for the month at 165 million pounds, compared with 95 million pounds on December 31, 1955.

Growers of heavy breed turkeys intended to raise 71,157,000 turkeys this year—13 percent more than in 1956.

The largest increase in heavy breed birds—19 percent—is planned in the West North Central States (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas).

Growers intended to increase heavy white breeds 10 percent above last year and bronze and other heavy breeds 15 percent. In 1956 heavy white breeds accounted for about a fourth of all heavies raised.

Compared with 1956, farmers intended to increase the number of heavy whites raised 17 percent in the West North Central States and 16 percent in the East North Central States (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin).

Largest decrease in number of heavy whites indicated is 8 percent in the West.

Bronze and other heavy breeds will be more numerous than last year in all sections if farmers' intentions are carried out. Largest increase indicated is

22 percent in the South Atlantic States (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida).

Growers of light breed turkeys intended to produce 13,134,000 turkeys in 1957—a decrease of 3 percent from 1956. All regions plan reductions, except the South Atlantic States which will be up 10 percent.

Growers indicated that in 1956 they sold 73 percent of the light breeds, 33 percent of the heavy whites, and less than 2 percent of the bronze and other heavy turkeys as fryer-roasters.

## Lambs on Feed January 1 Largest Since 1948

Sheep and lambs on feed for market in the United States on January 1 are estimated at 4,468,000 head by the Crop Reporting Board. This is the largest January 1 estimate for any year since 1948. It exceeds the estimate of a year earlier by 207,000 head, or 5 percent.

Increases of 30 percent were recorded in Idaho, 22 percent in Iowa, 20 percent in Indiana and Oregon, 19 percent in Nebraska.

Increases of 15 percent for Texas were largely in the Panhandle. There many lambs are being run on irrigated sorghum stubble. A limited number are being grazed on irrigated wheat fields.

Lamb-feeding operations in Colorado were estimated as the largest since 1952 and were up 11 percent over 1956.

Lamb feeding in the North Platte Valley of Nebraska and Wyoming was up 21 percent from last year. In California, the estimate for January 1 is up 10 percent.

Heavy declines came in a few States. These included New Mexico, 68 percent; Alabama, 45 percent; Montana, 37 percent; and Oklahoma, 34 percent. Declines of 15 percent were registered in Nevada and Arizona.

Weather up to January 1 was favorable to lamb feeding in the country as a whole, except in the Great Plains area. There, lack of moisture has limited the use of wheat pastures.

## Farm Income

Farmers received an estimated \$30 billion from marketings in 1956, a 3-percent increase over the previous year. Government payments to farmers totaled over half a billion dollars, about half of which came from the Soil Bank program.

Cash receipts from farm marketings in December are tentatively estimated at about \$2.7 billion, down 16 percent from November but about the same as in December 1955. Receipts from livestock and products totaled about \$1.3 billion, and from crops about \$1.4 billion, both down seasonally from November.

## Hogs

Hog prices may rise further this winter though a downturn is likely in late winter or early spring when marketings from the fall pig crop are largest. Smaller marketings probably will hold prices above 1956 levels through most or all of 1957.

## Dairy

Milk production will continue high this winter. The relation between prices of milk and feed favors large dairy output. Supplies of feed concentrates are at record levels, though the quality of hay in some northern sections is not as good as last year. For the year as a whole, prospects indicate that output will rise about 2 billion pounds above the 1956 total of 127 billion.

Consumption per person of all dairy products combined in 1956 was 1 percent above 1955. Little change is likely in 1957.

## Broilers

Figures on chick placements indicate that broiler marketings in March will be higher than in January when they were a tenth above a year earlier. But

prices may be above the level of late 1956 and early 1957 when broilers met stiff competition from turkeys.

## Soybeans

Large supplies are expected to limit the seasonal rise in soybean prices in late winter or spring. Prices to farmers in mid-January were \$2.31 per bushel, 12 cents above a year earlier and 16 cents above the support level. Increase was stimulated by strong export and domestic demand and the large quantities being withheld from market by farmers. The 1956 crop topped the 1955 record by 75 million bushels.

## Feed Grains

Mid-December prices to farmers were up an average of 9 percent from a year earlier. However, seasonal rise last fall was not as great as in the same period of 1955. The seasonal gain in the next few months also is likely to be less than the fairly sharp rise of a year earlier.

## Wheat

Exports have been moving out rapidly. The 1956-57 total may be a fourth above the 350 million of 1955-56. Heavy exports, the new export program, and price supports are factors in the strong wheat market. In early January, prices were above the effective loan, above a year ago, and near the highest to date in the season.

## Cattle

A record 6.1 million head of cattle and calves were on feed the first of January. While this is a 4-percent gain over a year earlier, farmers' plans indicate that marketings this winter will be below last winter's heavy movement. Prices of fed steers are expected to level out from their late fall decline. They will probably hold higher this winter and spring than the low points of February 1956.

# DROUGHT HOLDS KEY TO CATTLE OUTLOOK

Cattle slaughter and the level of cattle prices in coming months will depend to a considerable degree on whether the drought persists in the Central and Southern Plains and the Southwest.

Lower prices are likely if drought continues. However, if the drought moderates, a small improvement in prices would be expected for 1957.

Continued severe drought would almost certainly reduce cattle numbers during 1957. While this would mean lower prices this year, it would assure higher prices a year or two from now.

Current range conditions in much of the West are the poorest since the dry 1930's. Pasture and roughage supplies in drought areas are now critical.

Many stockmen in drought areas were able to maintain their herds in fair condition for a time with feed they bought to supplement severely damaged pastures. Drought, however, cut production of grain and forage feed in several areas in 1956, and hay crop yields were down sharply last summer in much of the Plains.

Cattle marketings in drought areas have expanded as the long dry period has lengthened and the shortage of feed become acute. Many producers who waited out the early dry period and used heavy supplemental feeding to save their stock were by early February forced to market their cattle.

To the extent that breeding herds are being marketed for slaughter, some reductions can be expected in future production. About 30 percent of the calf crop is produced in 10 States which have suffered worst drought—Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona.

From July to November 1956 cattle slaughter under Federal inspection increased substantially in areas that had drought. In the South Central States, of which Texas and Oklahoma are the

chief cattle States, it was up 20 percent from the year before.

In New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, and Montana (a group in which the first six States were among the leading drought sufferers) it was up 14 percent. In Missouri and Kansas it increased 7 percent. All other regions, on the other hand, showed an average gain of only 2 percent.

The Nation's cattle herd, on the whole, has shown a surprising stability in numbers during the last 3 or 4 years. Among States affected by drought, Texas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Kansas reached peak numbers in 1954 or earlier and have edged lower since. However, increases in other areas have overshadowed decreases in those States.

Earl E. Miller  
*Agricultural Economics Division, AMS*

## Memo to Egg Farmers

Prices to farmers for eggs have been running well below a year earlier since July 1956. In December 1956 they were down 10 cents a dozen.

The decline in egg prices in 1957 may reduce somewhat the number of chickens raised for replacement of laying flocks. But the cut is not likely to be as great as you might expect from the reduction in egg prices. Farmers seem to be paying less attention than formerly to short-run changes in prices in planning for future production.

The reduction in the number of chickens raised for laying flock replacement this year is unlikely to be large enough to reduce egg production in the last half of 1957 below a year earlier. The long-time trend toward increased egg production per bird is likely to continue.

Furthermore, farmers now tend to keep layers in production longer than formerly. These factors are likely to maintain production in the last half of 1957 at or above the 1956 rate.

Best estimate is that laying flock replacements would have to be cut at least 7 or 8 percent to reduce egg production next fall.



# TOTAL POTATO STOCKS REPORTS GIVE GROWERS SUPPLY PICTURE

**Potato Growers:** Are you studying and making use of the new total potato stocks reports?

They show 101.1 million hundred-weight of stocks held by growers and local dealers as of January 1, 1957, according to the Crop Reporting Board of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The figure is up 17 percent from the holdings on January 1, 1956, and up 11 percent from the 1950-55 average.

The first such report gave you the total storage stocks in the hands of growers and local dealers as of December 1, 1956. Similar reports have been made as of January 1, 1957, and February 1, 1957. The next report—and last for this marketing season—will be made as of March 1, 1957. It will be issued on March 15.

## Reports Are Timely

The reports are planned to give you more and better information on production and supplies—and give it to you at a time when you can make the best use of it. The value of such information has been known for a long time. The Board's task, getting it to you, became a little more feasible recently when Congress gave the Department additional funds for the purpose.

With the issuance of these stocks reports, for the first time in history you growers will have obtained a running inventory of potato supplies from the start of the fall crop to the completion of marketing. The reports are based, very largely, on the answers to questionnaires on the subject sent to 25,000 of you potato growers.

At the same time the Board has abandoned the old report on "Merchantable potatoes in the hands of growers and local dealers on January 1."

Here's why:

"Merchantable potatoes" had meant all potatoes available for sale. It had

included sales of lower grade potatoes for starch and livestock feed as well as sales for table use and seed. Merchantable stocks on January 1 were determined by estimating how many potatoes had been sold for all purposes to that date and subtracting them from the estimated total available for sale for the entire season.

This concept was useful in the past—but it's outmoded now. With about two-thirds of the fall crop now being marketed under various types of marketing agreements, there is a tendency to think of "merchantable potatoes" as those shipped for table use and seed. Local sales and sales to starch factories or for livestock feed are often thought of as "diverted" potatoes.

The new "total stocks" concept is production less total disappearance to date. Disappearance includes sales for all purposes, quantity of potatoes eaten or fed on farms where produced to date and all losses to date, whether through shrinkage, decay, dumping, or any other reason.

The total stocks figure is larger than the "merchantable" figure because it includes potatoes held for farm use and quantities lost after the date of the report. It should be much easier to understand. And it should give you growers a better means of estimating disappearance from month to month.

The stocks questionnaire also will be improved. That means it will be much easier to fill out.

However, there is a great deal more to the crop reporting service's new marketing information program than this.

## Uses

For example, once the program of total stocks reports has become firmly established, the crop reporting service is considering collecting and publishing with them supplementary data on



how potato crops were utilized in previous years.

The value of this to growers is obvious. Knowing trends, you would have important information on how the current crop may be disposed of effectively.

Eventually it might be possible to break down these data on previous seasons' crops into nonfood sales, food sales, and quantities not sold.

Under nonfood sales, separate figures would be given for sales for seed, starch and livestock feed, respectively. Under food sales there would be separate estimates for potatoes sold for table use, potato chips, French frozen fries, potato flour, and dehydration. The nonsold category would have the usual breakdowns.

Now at first these utilization data may be shown only for the United States as a whole. But later it may be possible to give a certain amount of detail on a regional or even State basis.

Considerable progress already has been made in expanding and in clarifying information furnished you growers on seasonal production.

## Six Seasons

The calendar year is now divided into six potato producing seasons—winter, early spring, late spring, early summer, late summer, and fall. That was done because this breakdown corresponds more closely to the pattern of harvesting and marketing.

Approximations of the late summer crop were made in all the important growing States—although this wasn't easy—and a complete program of seasonal production forecasts was inaugurated in 1956 for each of the six seasonal groups.

You potato growers who receive stocks report questionnaires can do a great deal to make sure that what the Crop Reporting Board is trying to do to help you really will be helpful. You can do this by filling out the questionnaire carefully and returning it promptly.

Reginald Royston  
*Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS*

# "Bert" Newell's Letter

I am going to get me some new specs. Seems like things get a little blurry at times and I get worried about what I might be missing when someone says, "Gee, did you see that," and I didn't see anything unusual at all.

To see things clearly is really quite important. It doesn't always mean a fellow has to have eyeglasses, but of course that helps if you've reached the bifocal stage. I am thinking more particularly of understanding all the facts in a situation and using this knowledge to judge the best course of action. With good reliable information a blind man can see lots of things as good as anybody. I'll bet you often get some of the best ideas or think through a problem more clearly in the middle of the night when everything is dark and quiet—I do.

Putting facts together and reasoning from them to the solution of a problem is really research. I have heard fellows say, "I'm no researcher, I'm an action man." I guess it all depends on how you define research.

Any time a fellow is confronted with a new problem, he usually collects some data and makes his decision on the analysis of those facts. This, I say, is a kind of research. So all of us are researchers in a way. In fact, I think that a fellow who stops researching stops growing, and the world passes him by as a "has been."

Our job is to provide facts, and we do a lot of research to find ways of doing our job better. You use these facts, we hope, but you do a lot of research in applying them to your particular situation or your particular problems. I regard these reports of basic facts much as I do a pair of trifocal glasses. Used properly, they will help you get a clearer look at the immediate, the short-time, and the long-time situation.

S. R. Newell  
*Chairman, Crop Reporting Board, AMS*

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Prices Received and Paid by Farmers

(1910-14=100)

Date	Prices received by farmers	Parity ratio <sup>1</sup>	Parity ratio
Jan. 1956-----	226	281	80
Oct. 1956-----	234	287	82
Nov. 1956-----	234	289	81
Dec. 1956-----	237	<sup>2</sup> 290	82
1956 average--	236	286	83
Jan. 1957-----	238	292	82

<sup>1</sup> Index of prices paid, interest, taxes, and wage rates.

<sup>2</sup> Revised.

Farmer's Share of Consumer's  
Food Dollar

December 1956-----	40 percent
November 1956-----	40 percent
December 1955-----	38 percent

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